
UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning

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UNESCO conference to review the role of adult learning and education for equity and sustainability in the Asia-Pacific region

Adult learning and education in the Asia-Pacific region is the focus of the CONFINTEA VI Regional Preparatory Conference for Asia and the Pacific that will take place in Seoul from 6 to 8 October 2008. Hosted by the Government of the Republic of Korea, the Conference will bring together ministers of education and other representatives of governments and multilateral partners, regional NGOs, experts and stakeholders from the private sector, universities and the media.

Entitled "Building Equitable and Sustainable Societies in Asia and Pacific: the Challenge of Adult Learning", the Conference will explore trends and practices in adult learning, with a focus on participation and inclusion; improving quality, literacy and key competencies; as well as delivery mechanisms, assessment and accreditation.

Twenty-nine of the 48 UNESCO Member States in the Asia-Pacific region have submitted national reports on the situation and development of youth and adult education. These studies will be included in a regional report to be prepared by the conference participants and presented at the global CONFINTEA VI (Sixth International Conference on Adult Education) Conference in Brazil in May 2009.

Recognition of the importance of lifelong learning is growing in several of the region's countries, but research indicates that much more attention is needed. The majority of the region's States still lack policies that conceive adult learning as broad, inclusive and multi-faceted.

According to the "Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2008", while the adult literacy rate in the period 1995-2004 for the Central Asian sub-region was 99 per cent, it was only 60 per cent in South Asia, which is home to half of the world's illiterate adults, some 388 million people. Gender disparity also remains a persistent problem: of the 124 million adults in East Asia without basic literacy and numeracy skills, 71 per cent are women.

Along with a comprehensive review of key issues and challenges in adult learning and education, the Seoul conference will also propose forward-looking strategies and recommendations to renew policies and action. These strategies and recommendations will later inform the global CONFINTEA VI document.

For further information on the conference:
www.unesco.org/confintea6

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